UNITED
NATIONS

CRC

Convention on the
Rights of the Child

Distr.
GENERAL

CRC/C/SR.113*
21 January 1994

Original: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Fifth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 113th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Monday, 17 January 1994, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mrs. BADRAN

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* No summary records were prepared for the 111th and 112th meetings.

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GE.94-15183 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS OF STATES PARTIES (agenda item 5) (continued)

Colombia (CRC/C/8/Add.3; CRC/C.5/WP.2)

1. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mr. González, Mrs. Galan, Mrs. Carrizosa de Lopez and Mr. La Rotta (Colombia) took seats at the Committee table.

2. The CHAIRPERSON welcomed the delegation of Colombia and invited it to respond to the list of issues (CRC/C.5/WP.2) to be taken up in connection with its report (CRC/C/8/Add.3), starting with the section entitled "General measures of implementation". The issues were as follows:

"General measures of implementation

(arts. 4, 42 and 44, para. 6 of the Convention)

1. Please provide more details about the process of preparing the report, in particular with regard to popular participation and the involvement of non-governmental organizations.

2. What concrete measures have been taken to make the report widely available to the public at large?

3. What further steps are planned for creating more widespread awareness among adults and children about the principles and provisions of the Convention?

4. To what extent have school curricula been adjusted to give room for education about the Convention? What measures have been taken to provide special training on the Convention to professional groups, and in particular judges, policemen and tutelary staff?

5. Please describe the national institution or institutions which have been set up, if any, to promote the rights of the child and monitor their observance. To what extent and in what ways are these institutions related to Colombian non-governmental organizations?

6. What is the status of the Convention in relation to national law? Can the provisions of the Convention be invoked in court?

7. What are the main achievements that the legal apparatus can claim with regard to the observance of the rights of the child?

8. What is the role of the Procurator for the Rights of the Child at the Office of the Ombudsman?

9. What are the main achievements that can be claimed by the Inter-Agency Committee for the Defence, Protection and Promotion of the Human Rights of Children and Young People during this period?

10. How are the Servicios de Protección y Reeducación al Menor Infractor y Contraventor evaluated? What problems have been encountered?

11. Please provide information on measures taken to establish mechanisms for collecting statistical data and other necessary information about the status of children as a basis for designing programmes for the rights of the child and indicate whether there is a need for technical assistance in this area.

12. What overall plans exist at present to implement the provisions of the Convention at the local level? Please describe steps taken to implement article 4 in regard to the allocation 'to the maximum extent of (...) available resources' for the rights of the child. Please indicate what proportion of the national budget is allocated to social priorities for children in official budgets, both central and local; and what indicators or target figures are used in this context.

13. To what extent does international cooperation go to enhancing the implementation of the Convention? What share of international assistance is devoted to programmes which benefit children?"

3. Mrs. GALAN (Colombia), replying to issue No. 1, said that community development was a priority and that many bodies, including those set up prior to ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, had been strengthened. The Plan of Action for Children, which had been set up under the auspices of the National Council for Economic and Social Policy (CONPES), the supreme national planning body, and other CONPES activities of a sectoral nature emphasized children's welfare. Colombia boasted a range of associations and bodies responsible for protecting the welfare of children and families and operating at different levels. For example, there were at least 5,000 parents' associations which helped to administer programmes set up to help local communities. Full training had been provided to assist associations members in carrying out their task.

4. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) played an active role in Colombia, as did international bodies like UNICEF, for example, which was providing assistance in areas such as health, education and training, where necessary. The Inter-Agency Committee for the Defence, Protection and Promotion of the Human Rights of Children and Young People had been set up in 1990 and worked closely with NGOs, UNICEF, government ministries, including Office of the Ombudsman, the Office of the Procurator for the Rights of the Child, and other interested parties, and has helped improve coordination.

5. The Office of the Ombudsman had been set up under the 1991 Constitution. The Ombudsman tried to ensure that the Convention and the principles enshrined in the Constitution were respected, provided advisory services, oversaw discussions on the situation of children in Colombia and made every effort to ensure that children's affairs remained a priority. There was a high level of coordination with the communities, especially in their attempts to break the vicious circle of violence against children who, once adults, perpetuated the situation.

6. Turning to issue No. 11, she said that statistical data on the status of children provided information of a qualitative nature to form the basis of programmes and activities, but thus far could not be used to assess the quality of children's lives, care and assistance.

7. At the local level, the National Programme of Action in Favour of Children (PAFI) was trying above all to adapt activities to local conditions and needs. The new Government was doing everything in its power to strengthen the Programme.

8. Mgr. BAMBAREN GASTELUMENDI said that efforts to improve the human rights situation in Colombia were being hampered by the twofold problem of narco-terrorism and poverty. Additional information was needed on the Office of the Presidential Adviser for Human Rights and the measures taken to promote respect for human rights within the police and other bodies responsible for public order and the administration of justice, in view of the allegations of human rights violations which included torture and the wrongful arrest and detention of minors. Furthermore, he asked what Colombia was doing to implement article 4 of the Convention and what proportion of the national budget was being allocated to social priorities for children.

9. Mrs. BELEMBAOGO asked for further information on the Minors' Code and on how the private and public sectors worked with community bodies and the way in which the Government cooperated with NGOs in the follow-up to the implementation of the Convention.

10. Mr. HAMMARBERG congratulated Colombia on its efforts to enshrine the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including the right to education, in its Constitution and on its National Programme of Action in Favour of Children which was actively trying to reach the goals laid down at the World Summit for Children. However, all Colombia's efforts were being frustrated as violence and poverty undermined any progress made. He asked for an explanation of the roots of the violence and what Colombia could do to create a non-violent society in which children would not be forced to confront, witness or endure violence in their formative years.

11. Secondly, the report (CRC/C/8/Add.3) mentioned that efforts were being made to eradicate poverty but the statistics provided seemed to imply that only 4 per cent of national income was reaching the poorest sectors of society, a situation which perpetuated, even aggravated social and economic injustice. What was Colombia doing to rectify the situation?

12. Mrs. SANTOS PAIS asked how the Convention fitted into the hierarchy of legislation in Colombia and what was the role and statute of the Office of the Procurator for the Rights of the Child. The Committee would welcome information on whether the Office of the Procurator was truly independent and if or how the Procurator could be removed from office before the term had come to its natural end, whether the Procurator was free to visit detention centres where children were kept or premises on which there had been allegations of torture or maltreatment, how the Office publicized its activities and its findings and what difficulties it faced in the course of its work.

13. Mrs. EUFEMIO said that she would like to know how the focus on tasks which had the greatest impact and multiplier effect, referred to in paragraph 24 of the report, applied in practice to children in especially difficult circumstances and how in fact such children were identified. Had a social survey been carried out and had the original analysis of the situation been updated? Paragraph 27 said that the participation of the private and non-governmental sector would increase competition with the public sector in activities undertaken on behalf of children. But the promotion of competition would surely undermine the coordination between the bodies concerned.

14. Mrs. SARDENBERG said that it was acknowledged that the Colombian Government was making a great effort to bring about economic change and to accelerate the social development of the Colombian people. Its signature of the six main human rights treaties indicated its intention to cooperate with the United Nations system. The task of reform was certainly a difficult one, and she would like to know what additional action the Government was taking to secure a significant improvement in the situation of children. The Government's strategy of taking an integrated approach covering women and the family as well as children should be matched by a parallel effort to integrate the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child into national legislation. On specific points, she would like to know what mechanisms existed for evaluating the National Programme of Action in Favour of Children and what machinery existed for coordination between the legal and administrative structures.

15. Mr. KOLOSOV said that although it was true that Colombia was engaged in the difficult process of privatization and decentralization, it was nevertheless not a poor country and had abundant natural resources which could be used for the benefit of its people. The reasons for the problem of poverty must lie elsewhere. Article 4 of the Convention required States parties to strive "to the maximum extent of their available resources" to implement the rights recognized in the Convention. He would like to have some evidence that Colombia was in fact working to the maximum extent of its resources to secure the best interests of children where their social and economic rights were concerned. If there were obstacles preventing the Government from so doing, he would like to know what they were.

16. Mr. GONZÁLEZ (Colombia) said that in addition to focusing on the specific issues, it was important for the Committee to understand the underlying situation in Colombia: the problem of violence and the problem of the police. Colombia was one of the most violent countries in the world, and the violence had an enormous effect on the whole of society and on children in particular. Drug trafficking involving all population groups was the main cause of the violence and had led to a situation of "drug terrorism". No country in the world had paid such a high price as Colombia to defend its society. Hundreds of public figures and other innocent victims had lost their lives. Indeed, Mrs. Galan's own brother, an outstanding political leader, had been murdered just four months before he would have become President of Colombia.

17. The problem of drug trafficking could not be solved by Colombia alone, for it was rooted in the enormous demand for drugs in other countries. Part of the problem was the lack of world solidarity in helping Colombia to combat

drug trafficking. However, the Government's determined efforts were changing the situation and the violence was diminishing. Colombia had entered upon an era of hope.

18. The Government was concentrating on three areas. Firstly, it was reforming the Constitution, introducing new rights, including rights of the child. Secondly, it was reforming the justice system in order to secure overall control of the country by ensuring that an independent judiciary worked effectively at all levels. Thirdly, and most importantly, it was reforming the national police, for members of the police were often the perpetrators of the violence. The Government had taken action to eradicate corruption in the police force and to establish procedures to protect the human rights of citizens when dealing with the police. It was establishing supervisory organs, including a special public prosecutor's office to investigate allegations of violations of human rights by the police. The reforms in those three areas demonstrated the Government's political will for change.

19. It was true that Colombia had still had social groups living in total poverty. However, efforts were being made to eradicate that poverty, and the social and economic indicators demonstrated that progress was being made. The Government realized that privatization, decentralization and other neoliberal policies did not relieve it of its responsibilities where the poor were concerned. Fortunately, Colombia was one Latin American country never to have recorded a negative growth rate in the past 30 years. In 1993 its growth rate had been 5.2 per cent - a result not only of privatization but also of State investment in the social sector. Colombia was also fortunate in having the lowest per capita foreign debt rate in Latin America and did not have to cut social programmes to repay loans. In 1994 the Government was to make its biggest ever investment in the social sector. Colombia was rich in natural resources and believed that they should be shared by all its citizens. It presented an open face to the world and did not try to hide its problems. He hoped that the Committee would bear in mind the situation he had described in its assessment of Colombia's report. The Colombian authorities would certainly heed the Committee's recommendations.

20. Mrs. GALAN (Colombia), responding to points raised by members of the Committee, said that the question of the rights of the child had already been incorporated in the curricula of the education system at all levels with a view to educating pupils about, and changing their attitude to, human rights.

21. The Minors' Police had clearly defined functions in the protection of children. Over the past three years a special effort had been made to educate the members of the force about the rights of the child and the importance of their role in securing the exercise of those rights. The Minors' Police was functioning well in providing assistance to children in difficulties. Information about the assistance available from the Minors' Police was published in the media.

22. The responsibility for coordination of the application of the measures contained in the Minors' Code and for coordination with NGOs rested with the National Family Welfare System working through the Colombian Family Welfare Institute. The Office of the Procurator for the Rights of the Child was

responsible for ensuring compliance with the rules to be observed by authorities charged with protection of minors and the family. The Office was a fully independent permanent organ which operated through local, regional and national branches.

23. The National Family Welfare System consisted of a network of bodies and institutions that dealt with the problems of minors and the family through appropriate welfare and protection programmes. The entire network was coordinated by the Colombian Family Welfare Institute. The Institute as well as the different bodies involved were represented at regional level throughout the country. Moreover, committees were set up at departmental and municipal level to monitor the progress of the programmes under way. Under the former centralized system, problems had thus been encountered in particular with regard to distribution of resources. The system had thus been decentralized relatively recently with the aim of enabling each department to assume its own responsibilities rather than laying the blame on the central Government. She was confident that improvements would be made, particularly since additional resources would be available at local level to meet the basic needs of the population and in particular children and since a larger proportion of the national budget had been earmarked for health.

24. As to follow-up mechanisms, indicators were being prepared for the National Programme of Action in Favour of Children, with specific goals and deadlines, which she hoped would be met with the assistance of the institutions concerned. For instance, the objective for the year 2000 was to provide adequate care for all juvenile delinquents and offenders, with special attention being paid to the former category. In that connection and as an indication of progress being made, she drew attention to the legislation passed in December 1993 under which all Colombian nationals were eligible for social security.

25. The problem of violence was being carefully considered, since it was recognized that violence in the home led to violence among children. Efforts were therefore being made to instil democratic principles into family life. A major problem among violent children was their inability to communicate: consequently, the accent was on inculcating feelings of self-esteem, affection, freedom and independence in such children. One of the ways in which problems were identified was by watching children at play, where they often imitated their parents' behaviour. Efforts were also being made through television programmes, to teach children respect for others starting with their recreation activities. She stressed that it was not easy to change attitudes in a society which had known centuries of violence. None the less, she was confident of success, and that the time would come when children could express their views and feelings and know that they would be heard by their parents. Moreover, it was difficult to ensure peaceful coexistence where there was a chronic shortage of housing, food and employment. The first stage in the long process of change must therefore be to satisfy such basic needs, which would require a concerted effort on all sides. The previous year considerable investments had been made to promote small enterprises and apprenticeships in depressed areas with a view to providing a basic income for fathers and thereby improve the standard of living of their families.

26. Replying to queries about the status of the Convention in relation to national law, she said that it had been incorporated in Colombia's legislation by Act No. 12 of January 1991. Moreover, under the new Colombian Constitution the rights of children were recognized as constitutional obligations and so the provisions of the Convention had been assigned the highest possible status in Colombian legislation.

27. The extensive research conducted into children in especially difficult circumstances had highlighted how little was known about the phenomenon of abandonment, when children were at risk and how they could be helped. Efforts had been made to provide information on the bodies responsible for the survival, protection and development of children and on what should be done to ensure that their rights were respected. The various programmes implemented by different institutions such as the Ministry of Education as well as programmes implemented in rural areas were being analysed. Furthermore, meetings had been held to ensure interface and to pool efforts with a view to improving the quality and extending the coverage of such programmes.

28. As to the procedures for placing children in institutions or foster homes, she said that upon arrival at one of the centres of the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF) a child would be invited to explain what had happened to him, following which a declaration of abandonment would be prepared, as appropriate. Thereafter and in line with the provisions of the Minors' Code, steps would be taken to ensure that the child was placed in a suitable institution or family environment, since once declared abandoned he or she would be eligible for adoption or fostering. The phenomenon of abandoning children was a matter of great concern to the Colombian Government especially in view of the violence that was rife throughout the country. Regrettably, children were often abandoned by their parents as there were many unwanted pregnancies. As a result a programme had been launched in 1991 for pregnant women and future fathers, who all the same rarely attended, to encourage parents to accept their child and start taking an interest in its health and welfare before its birth. There was also a nationwide programme for women and children to monitor the nutritional situation of children from conception through prenatal checkups and hospital care during childbirth. The programme required substantial financial outlay and more than 80 per cent of the budget for social welfare of the institutes concerned was earmarked for such nutritional and educational programmes to ensure, inter alia, the minimum weight necessary for newborn children. NGOs played an important role in such preventive and educational programmes by working at the community level to achieve the common goal of ensuring children's welfare. The assistance of the NGOs was also invaluable in the field of education, particularly at pre-school level where women in the community were trained to provide daily care for children under the age of 7 so as to ensure their basic development, health and recreation. Likewise, parents' associations were involved in complementary activities at primary and secondary school level.

29. Referring to the participation of children, she said that three years previously the concept of a school administration had been introduced and was fast gaining momentum. Schoolchildren elected their own representatives to the school board so that they could give their views on how the school should be run and what improvements were needed. They also set up different

committees on recreation and academic subjects and through their activities learned respect for other individuals and how to solve problems and take decisions.

30. As the previous speaker had indicated, the Government was endeavouring to raise the level of funding provided for social welfare. The allocation in the national budget for health had been increased by 4 per cent, while the resources earmarked for education had been given a large boost. In addition to 2 per cent of the national budget, the Colombian Institute for Social Welfare had an alternative source of funding, namely 3 per cent of the monthly receipts from the Government and other public bodies. The current collection rate for such receipts was approximately 90 per cent, which would guarantee the implementation of the many vital programmes under way. The budget of the Ministry of Health had also been increased and through the introduction of reforms and the greater participation of society it was hoped that current health standards would be improved. Government spending on social welfare was steadily rising so that its undertakings and the goals it had set would be met.

31. Responding to queries regarding the implementation of an evaluation mechanism, she said that it was an area where many difficulties had been encountered and further efforts were required. Various indicators would be analysed to ascertain whether the National Programme of Action in Favour of Children was being properly implemented. A national information system was being set up to monitor the health situation throughout the country. For example, there were considerable regional differences in the infant mortality rate, which was much higher in more isolated areas. Indicators relating to the percentage of children in the population, the extent of health care provided, statistics on abandoned children to name but a few had also been established. The collection of information nationwide and its proper analysis to ensure improvements in the programmes under way was indeed a real challenge. Moreover, the information system set up should be accessible not only to NGOs and government bodies but also to the community at large with a view to securing its commitment to child care. Already some parents' associations had set up committees to disseminate information on community programmes available and to monitor the utilization of resources allocated and performance of employees. The process was therefore well under way and she hoped that through an improved information system and better follow-up mechanisms substantial improvements would be made.

32. Mr. HAMMARBERG saw a difference between Mr. González's analysis of the roots of the violence in Colombia and the inferences to be drawn from the report itself. Mr. González had pinned most of the blame on drug trafficking and drug terrorism, but to the outsider, at least, it seemed clear that the causes of violence were more complex than that. As an example, he cited the status of women in Colombian society and the way the issue was dealt with in schools. He noted that Colombia had scored some remarkable successes, one being in lowering child mortality rates, which gave Colombia one of the best records in Latin America. On the other hand, he pointed out that according to UNICEF two thirds of the population lived below poverty level and the proportion of malnourished children was also higher than the average in Latin America. In his view, programmes to help children, though admirable, were vitiated by glaring injustices in the distribution of incomes. It did

not emerge from the report whether the Government had considered taking more drastic political action to support social programmes by working to eliminate a situation in which the richest 20 per cent of the population earned 14 times more than the poorest 20 per cent. Children were naturally affected by such inequity.

33. Mrs. GALAN (Colombia) said that many problems had been engendered by the widespread circulation of drug-related money. The population's desire for material goods was so great that some of its moral values had been lost. They had become desensitized to the importance of human rights, including those of children. For many years children had not had the right, or opportunity, to express themselves. It was the Government's aim to remedy the situation by changing cultural attitudes to violence and the acquisition of wealth. The process of education towards greater awareness had started, but there would be only gradual progress.

34. Mrs. CARRIZOSA DE LOPEZ (Colombia) said that the link between wealth and violence constituted a universal problem in developing countries. History showed that social difficulties arose from conflicts between material circumstances and the people's aspirations. Colombia was engaged in market reform, but political institutions were not developing fast enough to keep pace with the growth of wealth. Modernization always brought conflict, while on the other hand violence had existed before the reforms.

35. The CHAIRPERSON drew attention to the section of the list of issues entitled "Definition of the child", "General Principles" and "Best interests of the child" which read:

"Definition of the child

(art. 1 of the Convention)

1. Under Colombian legislation, what is meant by the term 'child' for the purposes of article 1 of the Convention?

2. Can the concept of 'minor', as used in the Minors' Code, be reconciled with article 1 of the Convention? What differences are there between a minor and a child? Why is the terminology not consistent with the text of the Convention?

3. Please provide information on the legal minimum age established for criminal responsibility, for medical or legal counselling without parental consent, for sexual consent, for marriage, for enlistment in the armed forces and for imprisonment.

4. Please comment on the comparison between the minimum age for admission to work and the age for finishing compulsory education.

5. Please indicate whether in these various respects boys are treated differently from girls and, if so, for what reason.

6. What assessment can be made of the operation of the law in ensuring compliance with the Convention? When offences occur, who receives the complaints, and who acts to enforce the law?

7. How is the work of the Defensores de Familia organized at the national level? What are their achievements and difficulties?

General principles

Non-discrimination (art. 2 of the Convention)

1. Please indicate to what extent the provisions of article 2 are covered in Colombian legislation with regard to all possible grounds for discrimination spelled out in that article.

2. Please indicate specific and concrete measures taken to combat discrimination against girls, rural children, children belonging to minorities or indigenous communities, refugee children, asylum-seeking children and disabled children, including measures to eliminate and prevent discriminatory attitudes and prejudices.

3. What efforts are being made to collect data broken down by groups of children on aspects relating to the Convention? Has any office been set up to compile and follow up cases of exploitation and discrimination in respect of children?

Best interests of the child (art. 3 of the Convention)

4. Please indicate in what way the 'best interests of the child' are taken into consideration in legislation as well as in judicial, administrative and other proceedings, including those concerned with the enforcement of the Convention."

36. After expressing the wish that representatives of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank had been present to hear how market reform could in fact lead to the deterioration of a situation, in that the poor did not necessarily benefit from greater overall wealth in a country, she asked the representative of Colombia to inform the Committee of her country's priorities under article 1 of the Convention. She would particularly like her to comment on the distinction between a "minor" and a "child" and on the question of the minimum age for admission to work, especially as far as non-discrimination was concerned.

37. Mrs. GALAN (Colombia) said that legally speaking a minor was a person under the age of 18, whereas a child was under the age of 7. Those age limits applied in a number of areas, including that of criminal responsibility. Minors, of either sex, convicted of an offence would either attend a re-education institution or stay with its family, but under supervision. Similarly, the legal age for sexual consent or marriage was 18. With regard to work, the law was that children under the age of 12 were not permitted to work, while those aged between 12 and 14 could do so if they had permission from their parents and authorization from the Ministry of Labour. Referring to violations of children's rights, she said that the situation had improved,

in that the numbers of Defensores de Familia had been increased over the past year from 300 to 492. Generally speaking, she was confident that Colombia's various preventive and protective programmes were helping to promote children's rights, particularly through various institutions which aimed to educate children, enabling them to recognize where their own best interests lay.

38. Mr. KOLOSOV said that, leaving aside the fact that 12 might well seem too low an age to start work, there was substantial evidence that children far younger than that were permitted to work. He asked whether that was true and, if so, what mechanisms existed for monitoring compliance with the law. He also wanted to know what sanctions could be applied for non-compliance.

39. Mgr. BAMBAREN GASTELUMENDI requested further information about the question of non-discrimination in Amazonia and the Pacific coast region. In so far as health, education, sanitation and general living conditions were far worse there than elsewhere, those areas could be said to suffer from regional discrimination. He wondered whether there were any programmes that paid special attention to such marginalized groups.

40. Mrs. GALAN (Colombia) confirmed that 12 was the minimum working age; she recognized, however, that for various cultural reasons younger children also worked, particularly in rural areas, where it was traditional for children to help with farm work. In setting the minimum age the Government had had to take into account what actually happened. She believed, however, that such cultural attitudes should be changed. As a first step, minimum hours of work had been laid down, although there was difficulty in ensuring that they were adhered to, since the Ministry of Labour had too few inspectors at its disposal. Parents should be made aware that the employment of children was an abuse, but meanwhile the Ministry authorized children under 12 to work only under exceptional circumstances. The ideal minimum age would be 18, but in reality it often fell to children as young as 14 to support the family. Sometimes three or four children would have to work in order to earn a minimum income for their family. The Ministry of Labour tried to ensure that such children worked a maximum of four hours a day, but the only way to monitor compliance with that was if members of the public reported abuses. Those found guilty of such abuse were fined. It was a delicate situation: the Government was anxious that children should be free to enjoy their childhood, but in a situation where 20 per cent of households were headed by a lone woman it was natural that children should want to help their mothers. The Government's solution had been to establish schools with curricula geared to the issues confronting such children, but at the same time it hoped to extend the system of subsidies so that children did not need to work. She added that NGOs also had a role in helping families in difficult circumstances, both economically and socially, for example in cases where children suffered from the absence of a father.

41. With regard to Amazonia and the Pacific coast, she acknowledged that programmes for them had encountered difficulties. The Government was increasing budgetary resources for those regions and, more importantly, was consulting the people on what their needs were, rather than imposing its own

ideas of what they needed. It was, however, a costly process, partly because of their remoteness. It was hoped that the situation would improve as a result of those regions having been upgraded to departments.

42. Mr. KOLOSOV, reverting to the difference between a minor and a child, asked whether, in view of what the representative of Colombia had said, any reference to children in the report should be understood to read "minors". He wondered, in other words, whether it was a case of mistranslation or misinterpretation, or whether the reference was truly to those under seven years of age.

43. Mrs. GALAN (Colombia) said that the use of the word "children" reflected the everyday language of Colombia, as opposed to that of lawyers and those who worked professionally with young people. "Children" should therefore be taken to mean those under the age of 18.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.